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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT
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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

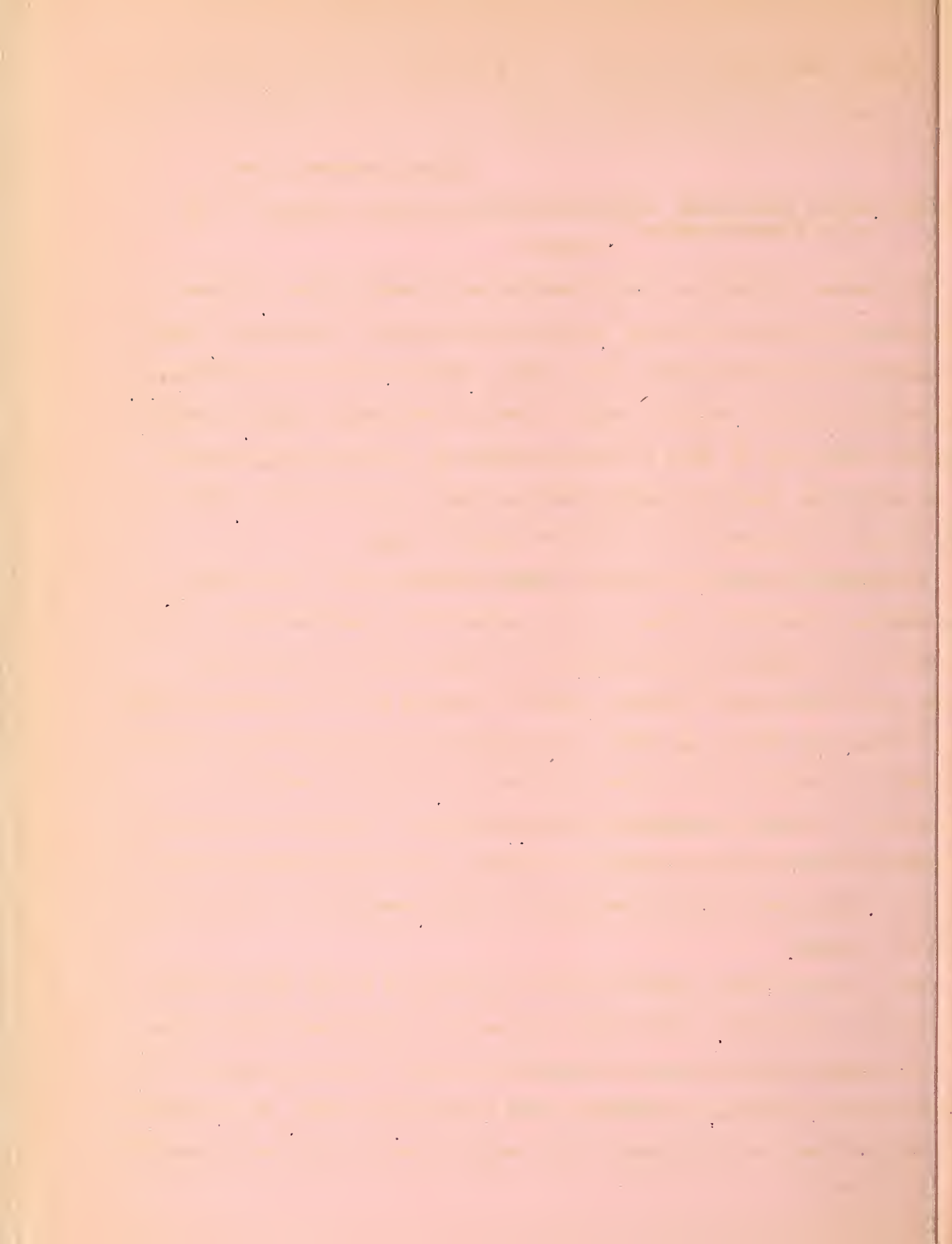
Friday, December 8, 1944

Subject: "Medium Grade Eggs". Information from distribution officials of the War Food Administration.

The Bushman in Africa has a very practical way of cooking eggs. He makes a tiny opening at one end of the egg. He rests the other end in hot ashes. Through the opening, he stirs the contents with a stick. Doesn't sound very practical...or even probable does it? Well, the secret is that he eats ostrich eggs, and ostrich eggs come pretty big. In fact, an average ostrich egg is about equal in content to six hen's eggs. There are usually about two dozen eggs in one nest. After he eats the egg, the Bushman uses the shell for carrying water.

In grandmother's day, she made very pretty decorations out of egg shells. She punctured a small hole in the egg, and drained out the yolk and white in much the same way the African natives do...but it's pretty safe to say that grandma didn't get her idea from the Bushman. After she emptied the egg, grandmother painted the thin, whole shell a gay color. She strung different colored shells together and hung them around the room to make gay ornaments. Most of us don't put egg shells to the use that our grandparents did...though it is a good idea to remember, with Christmas tree days approaching and a shortage of the usual Christmas tree ornaments. After you've finished painting the shells, scramble the whites and the yolks for a snack.

Even if we don't have a common use for egg shells, we do have plenty of use for the eggs in our diet. Next to milk, eggs are the best protective food we can eat. The nutritionists rate eggs as "protective" because they are a source of important protein, minerals, and vitamins needed to safeguard health. So, it certainly makes good sense for every member of the family to have an egg a day if possible.



If that isn't possible, try to give young children five or six eggs a week...and grown members of the family from four to five eggs a week.

Of course you can count the eggs that go into other dishes for your daily quota. That brings up the point about eggs that is most timely for homemakers to know. Eggs used in combination with other dishes...or in baking...do not have to be top-grade. In fact, the homemaker who uses high cost eggs in cooking, isn't giving her budget a fair chance. Pound for pound, middle-grade or Grade B eggs are as nutritious as those of the top-grade. When they are used in dishes like pancakes, souffles, waffles, croquettes, and other mixtures...including puddings, cakes and cookies...Grade B eggs are as taste satisfying as the higher grade eggs.

And wise homemakers don't discriminate against either white or brown eggs. They know that the saying "you can't tell a book by its cover" might well be applied to eggs. The color of the shell doesn't mean a thing as far as food value of the content goes. The color of the shell is due to the breed of the fowl...not to the condition or the age of the egg.

The secret of success in cooking eggs is to use moderate, even heat. Then eggs will be tender when they are done. Eggs cooked at too high a temperature become tough and leathery. That's the reason good cooks put the baking dishes with custards or similar mixtures, in a pan of water in a moderate oven. In making cakes with many eggs...like sponge cakes...the heat of the oven may mean the difference between a prize winner and a flop. So keep that oven temperature moderate to low when your recipe calls for many eggs.

Here's a tip about meringue...egg whites whip up more quickly when they are at room temperature. Add a pinch of salt to the white just before beating. You'll be rewarded with a greater volume of foam. Medium grade eggs help you achieve a successful meringue too. The white is thinner and more liquid...at least compared with top grade eggs. This makes it beat up more readily than the firm white of other eggs.

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When you are buying eggs, look for the sticker that seals the carton. These stickers show the grade of the eggs and the date of grading. Since the quality of eggs change gradually, try to buy your eggs within a few days after the date stamped on the carton. Perhaps you are wondering who grades the eggs before they come to your local store and why. The actual grading is done by employees of the Office of Distribution of the War Food Administration...or by employees of the cooperating State agency who have been licensed by the Office of Distribution. The grading is done to help the homemaker get the quality she wants and is willing to pay for.

Many people have never used medium cost eggs because they believe that anything that isn't marked Grade A just isn't worth buying. These people have been closing their eyes to a good thing. In some parts of the country, stores have been charging even as much as nineteen cents a dozen less for Grade B eggs than for Grade A eggs. Homemakers who buy these eggs can reduce their food bill... without sacrificing any nutrients or taste appeal. Buying and using medium cost eggs for all baking purposes and as a cooking ingredient, will help also to conserve an important wartime food.

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